

Dear Representatives:

I respect all of your efforts in what you do for our state. I watched the video of last week's hearing and heard much testimony that was painful and true from the hearts of many parents and offenders. There are many types of members of the State Registry of Sex Offenders that make up this group. Consideration must be made to the impact that will happen on the many lives of those who should not be punished additionally due to changes in laws after their sentence dates.

I strongly oppose this bill passing as it is written. My son had an offense in 2001. He has served 19 years from the date of the crime without incident. His crime was that of consensual sexual relations with a girl 3 days short of 16. He was honest when asked and was convicted and served time in prison. Of a potential 15 year maximum, he was released in 22 months. He paid his fines and has nearly paid his dues in terms of his sentence. He has a good job and has held gainful employment since one week after his release. He is married now for 5 years with a lovely wife and 2 preschool children. But he is branded. He grew up with us coaching his t-ball, baseball, soccer and hockey teams. He played travel sports. He attended church and made his first communion and confirmation. He is not a rapist, a predator or a threat to society. He works and pays taxes just like everyone else. But he lives in fear of people keying his car, losing his job, children being ostracized. He cannot coach his son's teams or teach him to skate and play hockey. He cannot attend church. He cannot attend a daddy daughter dance. For that my heart breaks. He will look you in the eye and admit his crime. But he is not a sex offender. If the laws don't change, he is sentenced for life. My husband, (who just passed away) , his sister, my family, his Godparents, his inlaws everyone who knows him is aware that he is not someone to be afraid of. He made a terrible mistake and the punishment he was given was not for life according to the sentencing guidelines from 2001.

The current legislation is unfair in any sense that you would review it. If you were to receive a speeding ticket and had points on your license and paid a high fine, is it fair to come back 3 yrs or 5 yrs later and say you now lose your license and have to pay quadruple the fine and have 10 more points added to your license? If you robbed a bank, did your time and returned to society, is it fair to come back and send you back to prison or put you on parole because the sentencing guidelines change? If you think about it, this is exactly what this bill is stating. Constitutionally, this does not follow our rights as citizens of the United States. Can you truly agree with either of these examples?

My heart has ached for years over the situation, but I hold my head up and carry on in the best way any mother can. I have taught him to do the same. He is a strong and honest man. There are many others on the registry that I am sure have their stories to share.

Consideration also needs to be given to the school violation. Does it make a difference if you live 999 feet or 1001 feet from a school. The school zone violation did not exist in 2001. He is already stripped of the ability to go watch the kids play sports, sing in their Christmas shows and meet the teachers. This portion of the law does not protect anyone. Do you really think that someone in his position is going to run into a school and grab children and run out the door with them? He simply wants the opportunity when his time is done to participate in their lives

Most offenders of any crime, repeat within the first 1-2 years. 19 years later, with the end in sight, it is unjust to suddenly lock this down where there is never an end in sight.

Consider yourselves and mistakes you have made in life. I have made many. Consider this bill and the impact that it has in the lives of so many people. For those that are deserving, have repeated or their crime is more recent, let the laws as they are written bind people to paying for their crime according to those laws. But to retroactively, punish those who are already punished... isn't the original punishment enough??

I am happy to speak with any one of you and share more of my story as it relates to my son.

Thank you for reading my email.

Sincerely,

Gail Cross